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### News Release

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Joseph E. Williams, 46, was sentenced to life in prison today on two federal firearm charges by the Honorable Leonie M. Brinkema, United States District Court Judge. He was sentenced as an armed career offender.

On March 21, 2003, the body of Gail Collins was found in her apartment in the City of Alexandria. The criminal investigation indicated Ms. Collins was shot to death on March 11 or 12, 2003. The investigation further showed that her bank card was in defendant Williams' possession on March 12, 2003. Williams lived in the same apartment building as the victim. After Ms. Collins was killed, her bank card was used to withdraw \$580.00 from her bank accounts.

The defendant was found guilty at trial in September 2004 of being in possession of a firearm after being convicted of a felony, and being in possession of a firearm while an unlawful user of a controlled substance, crack cocaine. The murder was not prosecuted in United States District Court because of a lack of federal jurisdiction. However, the jury was presented with a special verdict form in which they were asked to make certain findings, and they found that Williams committed first degree murder when he killed Gail Collins.

This case was investigated by the Alexandria Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Assistant United States Attorneys Patrick F. Stokes and Erik R. Barnett prosecuted the case.

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